

Exhibit No. 9Date 2-7-07Bill No. SB-333

February 7, 2007

TO: Chairwoman Squires and Members of the Senate State Administration Committee

FROM: Joy Bruck, volunteer advocate, AARP Montana

**RE: Support of SB 333, Alternative sites for absentee voting in person**

Madame Chairwoman and members of the committee my name is Joy Bruck, volunteer advocate for AARP Montana. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization with 153,000 members in Montana. Montana is aging rapidly and by 2030 will have the third highest percentage of people over age 65 in the country. At the same time, rural counties that are aging are also losing total population. This means assistance available to the elderly is declining.

We support SB 333 because it addresses the problem of voters who need assistance voting absentee, but are unable to make it to the county courthouse to vote. This especially helps institutionalized voters, who may request for the election administrator to come to them.

SB 333 takes into account that we are a very large and very rural state with distinct needs. SB 333 is realistic in what it is asking of already overburdened county election offices. It is not asking to recreate precinct voting early, only asking that we reasonably expand access to voting.

AARP Montana has always supported absentee voting and will continue to encourage our members, who wish to take advantage of this process, to do so. We would also be willing to assist the state and counties to enact this legislation by providing volunteers. Many AARP members are currently trained election judges and are also active in senior centers and assisted living facilities. We would also assist in promoting the use of alternative sites, when there is need and the proper venue is available.

I encourage you to continue to expand access to voting and pass SB 333. Thank you.